



**HB 6105—An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Records
By Adult Adopted Persons**

Submitted by Karen Caffrey, Co-President, Access Connecticut, Now, Inc.
Planning & Development Committee
Public Hearing February 3, 2021

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Cassano and Representative McCarthy Vahey, Vice-Chairs Senator Needleman and Representative Goupil, Ranking Members Senator Hwang and Representative Zullo and Distinguished Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

Access Connecticut Now, Inc. **SUPPORTS HB 6105 - Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Records By Adult Adopted Persons**, so that all Connecticut adult adoptees, regardless of their date of birth, and their adult children and grandchildren, can obtain a copy of their original birth certificate from the registrar of vital statistics of the municipality where the adoptee was born.

Do adoptees actually have two birth certificates?

Yes. Every adoptee born in Connecticut has two birth certificates. One is their true, original birth certificate. It is created at the time of their birth and states their birth name and the name(s) of one or both biological parent(s). The second is their false, amended, yet legal/official birth certificate, which substitutes the names of their adoptive parents for their biological parents, and changes their birth name to their adopted name.

Why do adoptees have two birth certificates?

The dual birth certificate system was established in 1935. Over the years it has been justified as a means to protect children born to unwed mothers from the stigma of illegitimacy/bastardy, to protect infertile couples from the social and religious stigma of infertility, to protect “promiscuous” unwed mothers from being ruined and deemed unfit for good society or subsequent marriage, and to allow men who fathered “illegitimate” children to escape the financial and social consequences of paternity. All of these justifications are attempts to respond to shame-based societal forces.

Do any adoptees have the right to obtain their original birth certificate now?

Yes. Under current law, any adult adoptee:

- born after October 1, 1983,
- born before 1944,
- born any year, whose biological parent(s) named on the birth certificate has consented to its release, or
- born any year, whose biological parent(s) named on the birth certificate is deceased,

has the right to obtain their original birth certificate. (See attached Four Classes of Adoptees and Timeline setting forth the evolution of applicable law in Connecticut).

How are adoptees in the excluded class being harmed?

- Loss of the ability to know and participate in their biological heritage that every non-adopted citizen experiences as a matter of right.
- Inability to pass their biological heritage and family history on to their children and grandchildren.
- Lack of access to current family medical history resulting in subpar medical care, negative health consequences, increased medical costs, reduced longevity and death.
- Inability to prove their genealogical heritage necessary to establish dual citizenship in other countries.
- Psychological toll of being second class citizens who are discriminated against under the law.

In addition to the testimony submitted in support of HB 6105, Access Connecticut has compiled an [interactive and searchable database of over 500 testimonies](https://accessconnecticut.org/adoptee-birth-certificate-bill-written-public-testimony-index/) submitted in support of precursor bills since 2017, available at <https://accessconnecticut.org/adoptee-birth-certificate-bill-written-public-testimony-index/>. Detailed, moving stories of the harm incurred not only by adoptees but by their biological and adoptive parents can be found in detail there.

How does HB 6105 improve existing law?

- It **establishes equal treatment of all persons under the law** by eliminating an excluded class of adoptees and granting them equal rights to the non-adopted.
- It extends equality to all adopted citizens by providing access to **a true, accurate birth certificate** which memorializes an intimate event that pertains to them.
- It acknowledges the reality that **information about birth is co-owned** by the two people who are most intimately involved: the woman giving birth and the person being born.

- It **strengthens faith and trust in government** by treating all citizens equally under the law.
- It **recognizes the capability of adults** to handle their affairs without government intrusion or management.
- It **helps adoptees and their children protect their health** by enabling them to more easily obtain updated family medical history from birth relatives and public sources.
- It **reduces the risk of public disclosure** of birth parents and adoptees by reducing the likelihood that adoptees will use consumer DNA testing.
- It **restores a right** that all adoptees had until 1975 under Connecticut law.
- It is **supported by 85% of Connecticut residents** (2007 Connecticut Adoption Survey conducted by the University of Connecticut Center for Survey Research and Analysis)
- It **streamlines and simplifies the law**.

What organizations support HB 6105?

- The Village For Families & Children - CT's oldest social service adoption agency
- Connecticut Council on Adoption (CCA)
- Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families (CAFAF)
- ☐ A Coalition* of 18 Connecticut-based Pro-Women Organizations including CT-Chapter of National Organization of Women (CT-NOW) and Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) and The Connecticut Women's Consortium
- American Adoption Congress
- National Center on Adoption and Permanency
- Concerned United Birthparents (CUB) - the only national birth parent association
- Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproduction Attorneys (AAAA) - an organization of attorneys dedicated to the competent and ethical practice of adoption law
- Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS)
- Connecticut Chapter - National Association of Social Workers (NASW-CT)
- Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council
- Connecticut Town Clerks Association
- Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

*Coalition of CT based pro-women organizations:

- Access Connecticut
- Action Together CT
- Charter Oak Cultural Center
- Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ
- Connecticut Council on Adoption
- Connecticut Indivisible
- Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund
- Fairfield Standing United
- ForwardCT
- National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter
- National Organization for Women, Connecticut Chapter
- The Connecticut Women's Consortium
- True Colors
- West Haven Progressive Action Network
- Women's March Connecticut Chapter
- YWCA Greenwich
- YWCA Hartford Region

Respectfully Submitted,



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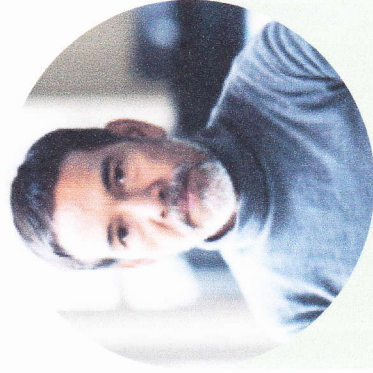
Access Connecticut is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization of adoptees, birth and adoptive parents, adoption professionals and supporters.

Connecticut's Four Classes of Adoptees

Current policy governing adult adoptees' access to their own original birth certificate is unfair, inconsistent, and discriminatory.



**Born before
January 1,
1944**



**Born
between
January 1,
1944 and
October 1,
1983**

Can prove birth
parents are deceased.



**Born
between
January 1,
1944 and
October 1,
1983**

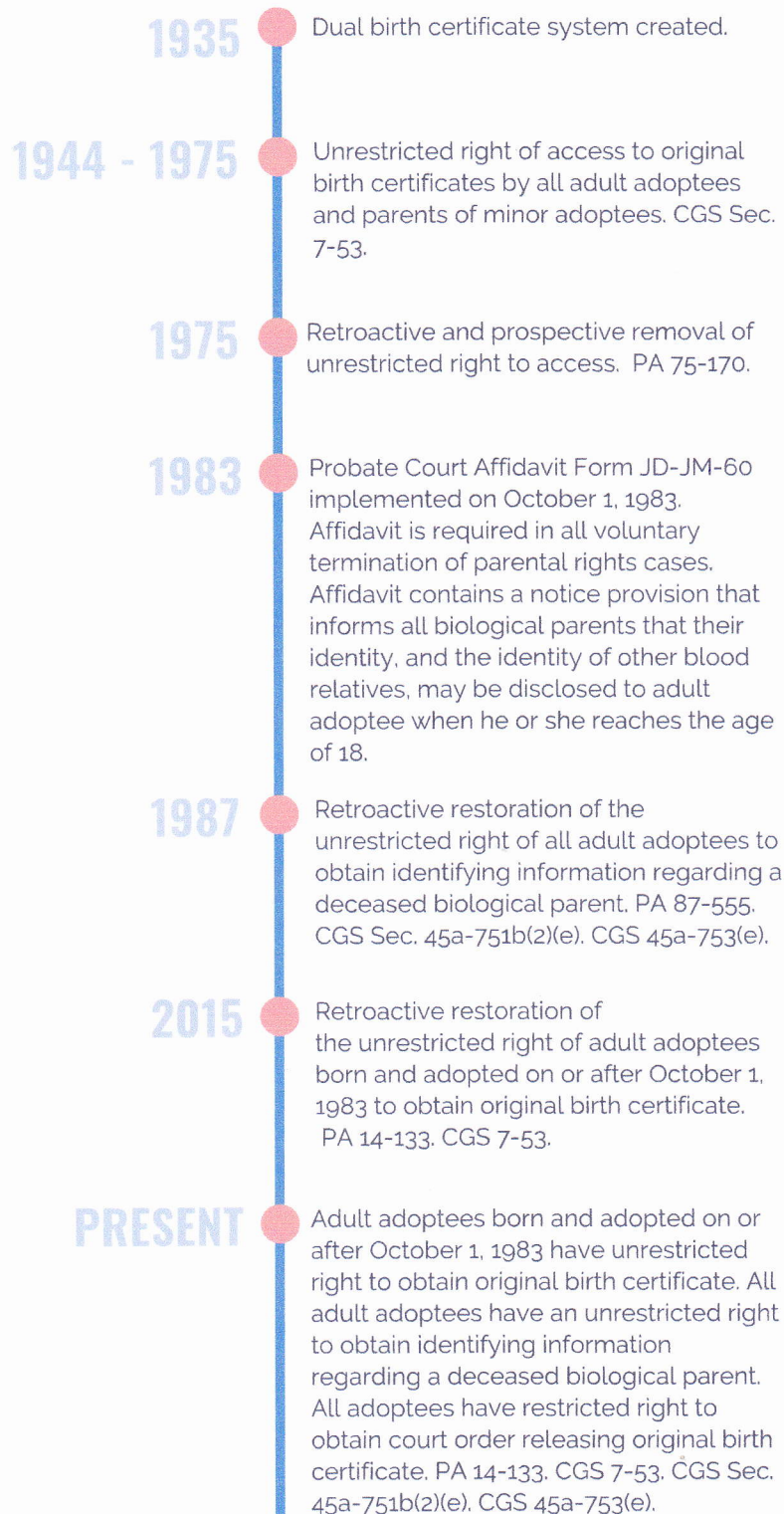


**Born on or
after
October 1,
1983**



TIMELINE

OF CONNECTICUT STATUTES FOR ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE ACCESS

- 
- 1935** Dual birth certificate system created.
- 1944 - 1975** Unrestricted right of access to original birth certificates by all adult adoptees and parents of minor adoptees. CGS Sec. 7-53.
- 1975** Retroactive and prospective removal of unrestricted right to access. PA 75-170.
- 1983** Probate Court Affidavit Form JD-JM-60 implemented on October 1, 1983. Affidavit is required in all voluntary termination of parental rights cases. Affidavit contains a notice provision that informs all biological parents that their identity, and the identity of other blood relatives, may be disclosed to adult adoptee when he or she reaches the age of 18.
- 1987** Retroactive restoration of the unrestricted right of all adult adoptees to obtain identifying information regarding a deceased biological parent. PA 87-555. CGS Sec. 45a-751b(2)(e). CGS 45a-753(e).
- 2015** Retroactive restoration of the unrestricted right of adult adoptees born and adopted on or after October 1, 1983 to obtain original birth certificate. PA 14-133. CGS 7-53.
- PRESENT** Adult adoptees born and adopted on or after October 1, 1983 have unrestricted right to obtain original birth certificate. All adult adoptees have an unrestricted right to obtain identifying information regarding a deceased biological parent. All adoptees have restricted right to obtain court order releasing original birth certificate. PA 14-133. CGS 7-53. CGS Sec. 45a-751b(2)(e). CGS 45a-753(e).

